THE NEW
SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • JUNE 07, 2020 • ₹8.00 • PAGES 24 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

BIDEN WINS DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT

He won the 1,991 delegates needed to secure the party's nomination after Tuesday's primaries in seven states and DC

'U.S. CRYING OUT FOR LEADERSHIP'

The former vice president has been the Democratic party's presumptive nominee since April when his principal challenger Bernie Sanders dropped out of the presidential race. After clinching the nomination on Saturday, Joe Biden resumed his criticism of President Donald Trump. "The country is crying out for leadership. Leadership that can unite us," he said

OPINION POLLS PUT HIM AHEAD OF TRUMP

- Several opinion polls put the veteran Democrat ahead of Trump. For instance, a recent CNN poll showed 51% backing him. RealClearPolitics gives him a 7.1 point lead over the president
- Biden has time and again spoken in favour of deepening US's strategic partnership with India on regional and global issues

77-yr-old

BIDEN HAS TWO UNSUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL BIDS TO HIS RECORD

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VIZIANAGARAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Maharashtra, Delhi stare at Covid explosion

20% of all who test for the virus turn out to be positive in Maharashtra and 18% in Delhi

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

ALMOST one in five persons who underwent a Covid-19 test in Delhi and Maharashtra in the past one week has tested positive, suggesting an infection explosion in the two states.

Data released by the National Institute of Epidemiology, under the Indian Council of Medical Research, shows the average test positivity rate in Maharashtra was above 20. In other words, there were more than 20 positive cases for every 100 tests done. Delhi, where for every 100 tests done, 18 turned out to be positive, fares marginally better.

The test positivity rate in the two states, where reports of severely sick Covid-19 patients being denied ICU beds are becoming common, is nearly thrice the national average.

The situation was not so grim until a few days back. The test positivity rate in Maharashtra was 14 while in Delhi, it was above 10. The cumulative cases in the two states are 80,229 and 26,334, respectively.

The steep rise in the positivity rate has prompted many experts to warn that unless enough tests are carried out, the quantum of cases would become unmanageable in the immediate future.

Oommen C Kurian, the lead of the health initiative with the Observer Research Foundation, said the increasing test positivity rate was an indication of states not testing enough and the increasing spread of the virus.

"Some states have to understand that tests are a multipurpose weapon against the virus. It helps prevent the spread in districts with low numbers and more importantly, it helps slow down the spread in districts with high numbers through systematic isolation of positive cases and quarantining of contacts," Kurian said.

The country's average seven-day test positivity rate is above 6, but the figure is rising in many states, including Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Haryana, West Bengal and Odisha.

"The test positivity rate close to or above 20 is extremely worrying and it's obvious that large-scale community transmission is taking place in Delhi and Maharashtra," said Dr Anupam Singh, an infectious disease expert in Ghaziabad.

Singh stressed the need for widening the testing criteria in order to catch new infections early and allowing autonomy to doctors to decide whom to test.

"We are seeing a large number of patients in the Delhi-NCR region who are asymptomatic or have atypical symptoms," he said. "Containment and mitigation strategies cannot be effective until there is an aggressive focus on testing, tracing and treating."

The views of the experts run counter to the Delhi government's recent order to not test all patients.

Even on Saturday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asked the public not to head to Covid-19 centres and hospitals to get themselves tested if they did not have symptoms of the disease.

YOUR NEWSPAPER IS TOTALLY SAFE

India, China hold top military-level talks to defuse tension

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

INDIA strongly put across its views aiming to resolve the month-long standoff during the talks between military commanders of the Indian Army and Chinese People's Liberation Army held on Saturday, sources said.

A senior Army officer said the meeting lasted for six hours with a lunch break in between. "The meeting started at 11:30 am at Moldo Border Personnel Meeting Hut on the Chinese side of the LAC and was on till 5:30 pm."

The Indian delegation was led by 14 Corps Commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh and China was represented by South Xinjiang Military Division Corps Commander Major General Lin Liu.

Eight other officers from both sides were also present.

Lt Gen Harinder Singh briefed the Army Chief General M M Naravane and Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Y K Joshi after he reached the Corps headquarters at Leh.

The briefing of the talks was also given to the officials in the Ministry of External Affairs. The Prime Minister's Office was also updated.

The two sides have held around a dozen rounds of talks since the first week of May when the standoff started at Pangong Tso Lake in the Eastern Ladakh.

COVID RITUALS AHEAD OF REOPENING

Priests sanitise the premises of Venkateshwara Temple in Rajajinagar, Bengaluru, on Saturday. Temples across the state will reopen on June 8. Devotees must maintain social distance and use face masks | PANDARINATH

Hotels reopen tomorrow, but no staff from virus-prevalent states

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

WITH the easing of lockdown norms, hotels and restaurants are gearing up to reopen from Monday. But in what could be seen as a controversial move, they have decided not to employ anyone from Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Gujarat which have been reporting high incidence of Covid-19, for the time being. There are about 50,000 hotels and restaurants, including darshins in Karnataka, of which 15,000 are in Bengaluru alone.

Karnataka Hoteliers Association president Chandrashekar Hebbar said, "Hotels and restaurants will ensure that workers from the states with high prevalence of Covid-19 are not hired. We do not want to take any risks." The travel history of other employees will be checked before they are allowed to work, he added.

Another hoteller, who did not wish to be named, said many eateries are dependent on cooks from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. "But, if our customers get to know that we have hired them, they will not come to us. We will lose customers," he added.

While Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, who held a meeting with representatives from the hospitality and tourism sectors on Saturday, emphasised on safety measures and adherence to the guidelines issued by the Union Government, hoteliers have already started making arrangements to adjust to the new situation.

Instead of steel and porcelain plates, they are planning to use disposable plates and plantain leaves to serve food. For coffee, tea, juice and water, disposable paper cups will be used, minimising human contact. The staff will wear masks and maintain social distancing and the body temperature of customers will be checked before they enter the premises, Hebbar said.

"We are trying to avoid human contact wherever possible. We do not want waiters to go near customers", he said stressing on self-service and maintaining social distancing. He also said customers will not be allowed to use washrooms on the premises.

K'taka gets ₹4,313 cr in GST dues, fuel tax trickles into coffers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a huge relief to the State Government, which is facing a severe fund crunch due to the Covid-19-induced lockdown, the Central Government has released Rs 4,313 crore towards the Goods and Services Tax (GST) component for December 2019-February 2020. With Unlock 1.0, there has also been an increase in collection of taxes on petrol and diesel in the state.

The lockdown had badly affected the state's economy and to overcome the crisis, the government has been pushing for economic revival even as it continues to take measures to fight the pandemic. A CMO official said the GST component coming at this juncture will help the state shore up its finances. Also, the situation is slowly improving after restrictions were eased with industries and other businesses restarting, the official pointed out.

On Saturday, at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, Finance Department officials informed that Rs 4,313.13 crore has been released by the Central Government as the GST compensation for the December-February period. The officials also pointed out that there is an increase in collection of taxes on automotive fuel.

Sales tax on fuel is among the major sources of revenue for the state and, according to estimates, the government gets around Rs 1,200 to 1,300 crore per month from it. However, it had dropped significantly during the lockdown due to restrictions on movement of vehicles within and outside the state. State excise, motor vehicle tax and registration of properties are other major sources of revenue for the state. P5

NATIONWIDE

ACTIVE CASES	CURED/DISCHARGED	DEATHS
1,159,42	1,140,72	6,642

Record 294 deaths in a day in India; WHO advises 3-layered face masks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A RECORD 294 Covid-19 deaths in 24 hours—the highest yet in a day— took India's coronavirus toll to 6,642 on Saturday. In total, there were 2.36 lakh confirmed coronavirus cases after accounting for the day's 9,887 new cases.

India now ranks 6th globally in terms of the number of cases, overtaking Italy, which was once the worst-hit country in the world. The US, Brazil, Russia, the UK and Spain are the five countries that have more confirmed cases than India now.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization on Saturday issued new guidance on the use of face masks saying, senior citizens and people with health issues should wear medical masks if maintaining social distance is not possible.

All others should wear a three-layer fabric mask—the first layer of absorbent cotton, followed by a polypropylene layer for filtration and finally a synthetic layer that is water-resistant to restrict droplets reaching the nose and mouth.

The world health body also emphasised that masks alone will not protect people from the deadly Covid-19. P7

WITH THIS ISSUE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MAGAZINE
PLUS 12 PAGES

EXPRESS READ

Congress moves Guj MLAs to resorts

Mumbai: Alarmed by the resignation of three Gujarat MLAs over the past three days, the Congress party moved its legislators to resorts in a bid to thwart any 'poaching' bid ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections.

Anti-dumping duty on Malaysian calculators

New Delhi: India has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of electronic calculators from Malaysia for five years, seeking to guard domestic players from cheap imports from that country.

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

378 NEW CASES

5,213 Positive cases as of Saturday

59 Total deaths

1,968 Total Recoveries

- The last positive patient from Hire Bagewadi in Belagavi, which was a corona hotspot, was discharged on Friday
- Vijayapura's Chapparband Galli, declared a containment zone on April 12, still sees new cases nearly 2 months later

REPORTS: P4

Most returning migrants are construction workers

RAJESH THAKUR, NAMITA BAJPAI & MUKESH RANJAN @ Patna/Lucknow/Ranchi

THE biggest chunk of migrant workers who have returned to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are engaged in construction activity, an analysis of the skill mapping being carried out by these states has revealed.

While it is 16.4% for UP, the percentages for Bihar and Jharkhand are 36.1% and 20.7%, respectively. The skill sets of other labourers are varied. There are drivers, tailors, electricians, carpenters, cooks, mechanics and even a small minority in banking and financial services.

These three states have received the maximum number of migrant labourers, 67.5 lakh as of Saturday, after the Covid-induced lockdown. The Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday during the hearing on the migrant workers that one crore had returned to their states.

The three states are mapping the skills of the workers in order to gainfully employ them. Till June 5, UP had mapped the skills of 28.13 lakh workers out of the 32 lakh who have returned while Bihar had done so for 12.36 lakh out of the 30 lakh. Jharkhand had finished skill mapping of 2.50 lakh labourers out of the 5.5 lakh returnees. CONTINUED ON: P7

PRICE FALL TAKES SHEEN OFF SILK FOR FARMERS

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Ramanagara

THE shimmering silk from Ramanagara lends beauty to the famous Kanchi, Dharmavaram and Banaras sarees and Karnataka's very own Ilkal, Molakalmuru and Mysore sarees.

But this year, sericulture farmers in Karnataka, mainly from Ramanagara and nearby districts, have been dealt a double blow due to the lockdown.

While they are paying twice the amount for silkworm eggs, the cocoons are selling at only half the price.

Thousands of sericulture farmers and silk reelers visit the cocoon market at Ramanagara, one of the largest in Asia, where, on an average, 40,000-50,000 kg of cocoons are auctioned every day. Farmers also come from Mandya, Chitradurga, Haveri, Kolar, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Rural and Chamarajnagar, and even from neighbouring states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

But ever since the lockdown, weavers have shut their weaving units with no market to sell their produce. The reelers are also not able to sell the silk yarn to the weavers and hence, they are either buying less cocoons or not buying at all. Due to this, the price of cocoons has fallen drastically, adding to the woes of the farming community.

Arun Kumar, a sericulture farmer from Hemmanahalli in Maddur taluk, said he gets a yield of about 100 kg of cocoons once in 25 days for which he spends Rs 30,000. Earlier, the cocoons would sell at Rs 500 per kg, but now the price has plummeted to Rs 250 per kg. "After spending on transportation and calculating other expenses, I hardly get Rs 3,000. Since I also rear cattle, I am able to manage somehow," he said. The State Government has not come to the rescue of sericulturists, unlike flower, fruit and vegetable growers, he rued.

Hanumanthappa, who had come all the way from Magod in Ranebennur, said he gets 80 kg of cocoons from 100 eggs. P5

> After spending on transportation and calculating other expenses, I hardly get Rs 3,000. Since I also rear cattle, I am able to manage somehow — Arun Kumar, a sericulture farmer from Maddur taluk

A silk farmer gathers cocoons into crates to get them weighed at the Ramanagara Cocoon Market near Bengaluru | MEGHANA SASTRY